

SENSIBLE RISKS, STUPID RISKS

Jeremy Jago

Are you tired, as I am, of hearing comparisons of risk, such as that in today's Guardian letters: 'The risk of contracting CJD from beef is around 500 times less than the annual risk of dying in a road accident.'

Risk comparisons are used when rational arguments are exhausted. They are attempts to appear calm and wise by people desperate to justify some course of action. They are often heard on news programmes from suits with public school accents. A spokesman for some environmentally dirty enterprise, grilled by an interviewer, typically says 'the overall risk is much smaller than those we accept in daily life.' He is trying to suggest that any 'smaller' risks than these are thereby 'acceptable'.

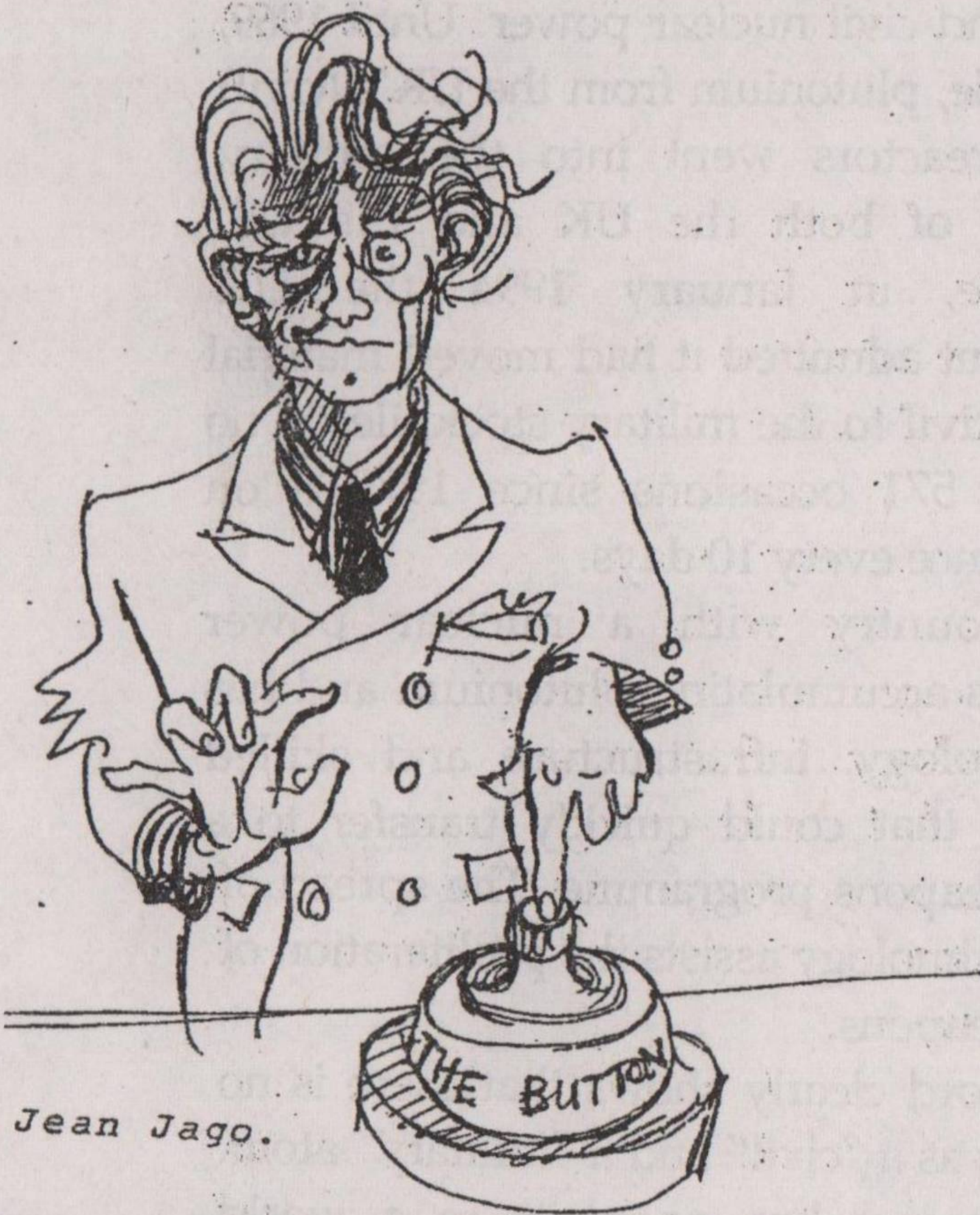
The 'comparison activity' (that which the risk is less than...) is invariably an innocent, everyday thing like crossing the road, watching TV, or cooking breakfast. More intriguing hazards like coracle-rowing or matzos-baking are less useful here. Unquestionably idiotic hazards such as bungee-jumping are no use at all.

What is 'acceptable risk'? Obviously: risk inherent in some activity whose benefits outweigh its dangers. But benefits to whom? and acceptable to whom? To society as a whole, or to the particular interest group seeking to justify the activity? Secondly, risk has two dimensions: probability of accident, and consequences of accident - the two are quite separate, and the second is almost always neglected completely. For instance, the probability of serious accident at a nuclear fuel processor is much less than that when using a chip pan. Does this make a nuclear plant safer than frying chips, as a tabloid once asserted? No - because the consequences of a nuclear accident, if it occurred, may well be worse than a chip pan fire.

Analysts try to calculate risks by assessing and balancing benefits with actual and possible losses. But some possible accidents, e.g. a Chernobyl-type incident or certain disease epidemics, are beyond cost assessment and cannot be 'balanced' by any benefit, however large.

The simple tests to apply, therefore, next time some facile risk comparison is trotted out, are: consider both dimensions of risk, and: how big is the sacrifice in avoiding the risk?

This puts sensible everyday risks (like crossing the road) into true perspective alongside environmental and health risks which, lobbyists would persuade us, are so 'small' by comparison.



Jean Jago.

No scientific evidence suggests that Cow Disease can transfer to humans and over-reaction could be premature...."

STALL RE-LAUNCH..

Saturday, 20th April - weather permitting.

New stall, new banner, new goods for sale.

Anne will be in touch soon.

200 CLUB.

Some members have not yet cancelled their standing orders to the 200 club.

NOTTINGHAM CND

Box 33, 118 MANSFIELD RD. NOTTINGHAM, NG1 3HL Tel: 9588586

Spring

1996

CUCKOO IN THE NEST.

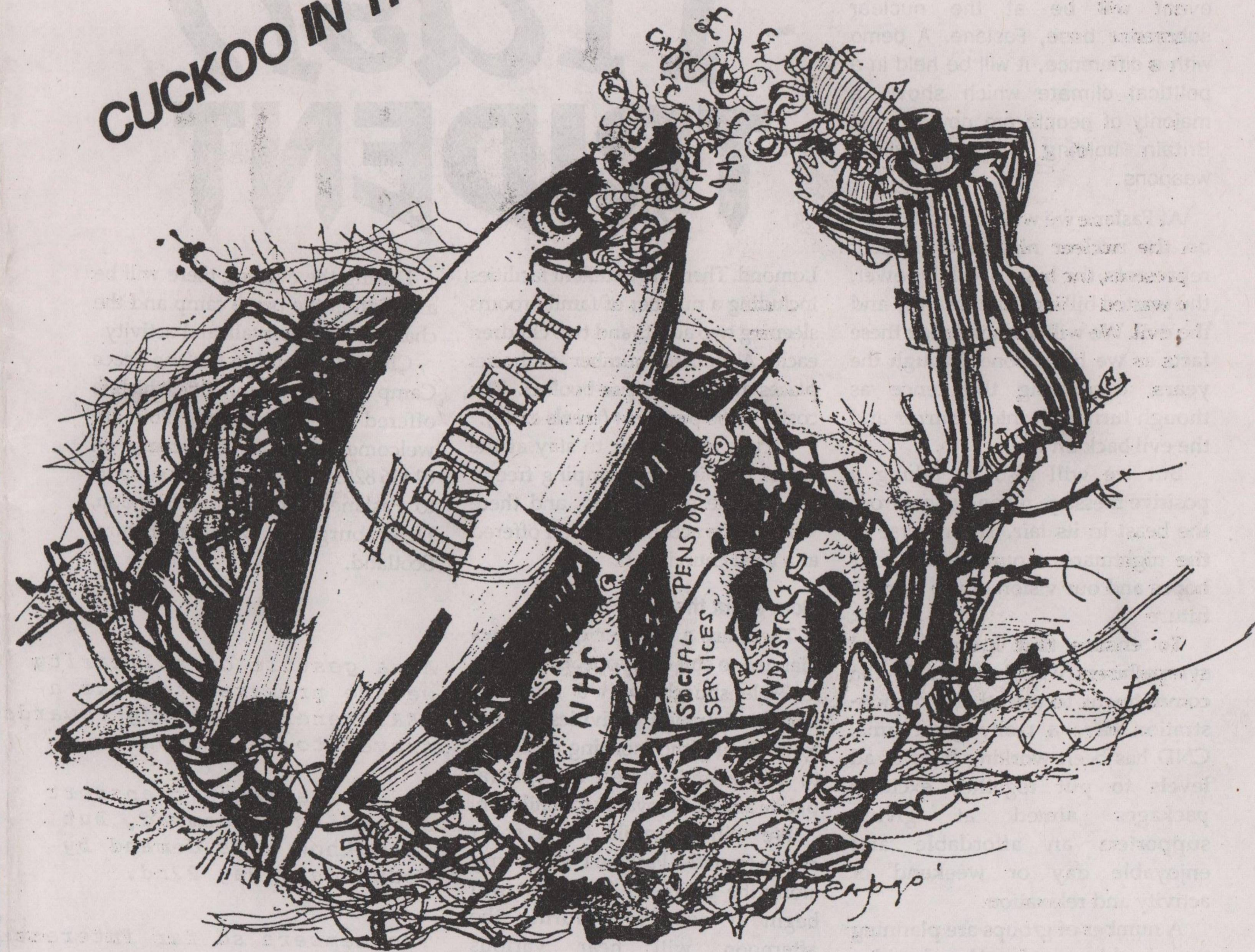


Illustration by Jean Jago.

WHO WANTS IT ?

WHO NEEDS IT?



Faslane - 15 June

Andy Pritchard, West Midlands
CND Regional Worker

Trash TRIDENT

In the year that has already seen the first operational patrols of Tactical Trident, CND's major campaign event will be at the nuclear submarine base, Faslane. A demo with a difference, it will be held in a political climate which shows a majority of people are now against Britain holding on to nuclear weapons.

At Faslane we will focus attention on the nuclear nightmare Trident represents, the huge overkill power, the wasted billions, the insanity and the evil. We will acknowledge these facts as we have done through the years, decorating the fence as though turning it into a mirror and the evil back on itself.

But we will also be taking a positive message when we confront the beast in its lair. The reverse of the nightmare - our dreams, our hopes and our vision of the world's future.

To ensure that members and sympathisers who have made the commitment to attend the demonstration have a really great time, CND has been working hard at all levels to put together exciting packages aimed at giving supporters an affordable and enjoyable day or weekend of activity and relaxation.

A number of groups are planning to make this a weekend break with a difference, combining campaigning with relaxation and contrasting the unsettling views of Faslane and its grim reality, with the tranquil beauty of Loch Lomond.

Amongst the accommodation options available to those staying over will be the chance to relax at arguably Britain's loveliest youth hostel, close to the shores of Loch

Lomond. There are excellent facilities including a number of family rooms, sleeping two adults and two children each. A limited number of hostel places have been pre-booked. The cost is £7.80 per night (meals extra).

Others may prefer to stay at the centre of things by camping free at the Faslane peace camp, and there will also be accommodation offered at a local church hall.

More about the day

There are a number of activities planned to suit everyone. Beginning in Helensburgh with a range of family campaign activities in the town during the morning designed to inform and interest the general public and be enjoyable for children.

We will assemble for a short march from the Faslane Peace Camp along the perimeter fence that will begin at noon and during the afternoon will hear various speeches, music, and participate in decorating the fence and defying the by-laws which ban 'aerial incursions', eg paper darts with messages on them.

Towards the end of the afternoon there will be the chance to opt for a rare look at the base from the waterside on one of three 75 minute trips from Helensburgh pier starting at 4.00pm.

During the evening there will be a ceilidh at the peace camp and the chance for further talk and activity.

CND is grateful to Faslane Peace Camp for their hospitality which is offered all year round. You are welcome to phone the camp on 01436 820901 and send your support to Faslane Peace Camp, Shandon, Helensburgh, Dumbartonshire, Scotland.

As a gesture of solidarity we are prepared to make a VERY generoussubsidy towards travel to this event.

We will arrange transport according to demand, but must know this demand by Wednesday, May 22nd.

The members so far interested are considering in camping.

If you intend to travel independantly, and have a spare seat, plase would you let us know..for mutual benefit.

PLEASE MAKE AN EFFORT, AND TRY TO COME WITH US.

Trident refit contract goes to US firm

A CND investigation has revealed that Defence Secretary Michael Portillo proposes to award the contract to refit Britain's Trident nuclear submarines to an American conglomerate with a history of safety violations and mismanagement in the nuclear industry.

In a new report, CND Chair Janet Bloomfield claims that the company, Brown and Root, has been repeatedly brought to court and accuses Government Ministers of poor judgement.

Brown and Root were sued in 1992 by the owners of a nuclear plant in Texas which B&R had built. The settlement, \$750 million, is believed to be the largest in American legal history. Over fifty serious construction and planning errors, were listed including inadequate welding on the water system that would cool the plant during an emergency.

Several Brown & Root employees have 'blown the whistle' and taken them to court for alleged victimisation and unfair dismissal because they had highlighted construction errors or safety violations. An electrical foreman was paid \$15,000 by B&R not to testify about his concerns over safety problems at plant licensing hearings.

Boycott costs Bordeaux \$200m

Bordeaux wine exports have been severely damaged by boycotts over French nuclear testing in the South Pacific and will take several years to recover, winemakers admitted yesterday. Mr Hubert Bouteiller, chairman of the CIVB industry body, said: "The scrapping from wine lists, the cancelling of orders and the postponement of sales promotions have had serious consequences for the weakest of the wine trade." Mr Francois de Chaxel, a wine trader who is also a CIVB official, estimated Bordeaux would suffer losses of at least FF1bn (\$200m). President Jacques Chirac has said that overall French exports have been unaffected by the boycott calls. The tests ended last month.

Reuter, Paris

Conference '95

The new set of officers elected at Conference in Manchester are: Chair - Janet Bloomfield; Treasurer - Mathew Pelling; Vice-Chairs - Carol Naughton, Jon Nott and Eirlys Rhiannon. The new officers are happy to speak at meetings and can be contacted at the London HQ.

CND's priorities for 1996 were decided at Conference. The three with the highest number of votes were: Trident, Testing and Chernobyl.

Conference passed a resolution approving in principle the incorporation of CND as a limited company. This will reduce the risk of Council members becoming liable for any debts CND may incur. Council has appointed a Working Group to produce the legal documentation which will be presented to Conference 1996 for approval. Any questions should be addressed to the Incorporation Working Group, c/o 162 Holloway Road, London N7 8dQ.

Ardleigh's DIARY

OTTERS set off thousands of alarms about potential Soviet submarine attacks, the New Scientist reveals this week.

It quotes a Swedish government survey which says that there were over 6,000 red alarms, which were explained when it was found out that signals given off by the otters were identical to those of propellers.

The news underlines the dangers that the mere possession of nuclear weapons creates.

Chair's Comment

There has been a little reported but remarkable shift in attitudes to nuclear weapons in Britain over the last few years.

It is present not just in popular opinion but also in the establishment. This was highlighted dramatically in November when Sir Michael Atiyah, President of The Royal Society, said in his anniversary address "I believe history will show that the insistence on a UK nuclear capability was fundamentally misguided, a total waste of resources and a significant factor in our relative economic decline over the past fifty years."

Opinion polls show that his attitude is now shared by the public. As late as 1993, polls conducted for the *Guardian* newspaper showed 51% of the UK's people still believing Britain was safer having its own nuclear weapons, but by 1995 only 32% of British people thought nuclear weapons were still necessary (MORI, 15-17 September 1995) with 51% believing that they were not.

In 1996 CND will be concentrating on moving the vast majority of British people on from their opposition to nuclear testing to positive support for the abolition of nuclear weapons, particularly the Trident system.

Let us never forget that history has proved us right on all the big questions of the last fifty years relating to the nuclear issue. On nuclear accidents, nuclear testing, the closeness of nuclear war at times like Cuba, and on low-level radiation, we have told the truth while the establishment has lied and covered up.

The urgency and importance of the task we face has led CND to set up a group to work on developing a longer term strategy for us. If you have any ideas, or proposals, please let us have them. We are a hugely creative and imaginative movement - let's make use of all the talent at our disposal to create a strategy for success.

Janet Bloomfield

Franco-British cooperation: a contradiction in terms?

Britain, as a so-called independent nuclear power, can hardly challenge similar French pretensions, including the need to test.

In any case, Britain has been an unwilling participant in the US-led nuclear testing moratorium. Having used the US Nevada testing site since 1962, Britain has to stop testing when the US does so, but to this day has never actually agreed to the moratorium.

When, in June last year, France announced it would resume testing, while most of the world reacted with shocked anger, the British government carefully refused to comment, saying that it was a matter for the French. As protests grew and it became clear that Australia and New Zealand in particular were outraged, as the November 1995 Commonwealth Conference neared, Major came under increasing pressure to voice some sort of opposition to the testing programme.

There were probably accurate press reports that the Foreign Office asked Chirac to save Major from further embarrassment in Auckland by not testing while he was actually over there, particularly as the Duke of Edinburgh had made it clear that the Royal Family were themselves rather unhappy about the whole affair.

Yet at the Major/Chirac meeting at Chequers and in London on October 29/30, Major came out with positive support for the French tests. He noted that Chirac had been advised by his scientists and experts that the tests were essential and he felt that the President, as a responsible leader, had to follow their advice. Hence Major would "offer his support for the tests."

At the same time the two leaders agreed a wide ranging series of defence and foreign

policy co-operative measures with a *Joint Statement on Nuclear Co-operation* as a centerpiece, along with a *Background Note on Defence Co-operation* and a document called *Global Partners*.

Why, with substantial anti-French feeling in Britain, with Euro-phobia rampant in the Tory Party, with even the Labour Party condemning the tests, did this atypical Anglo-French solidarity emerge - a solidarity that is even more surprising in the context of the historically very different attitudes of Britain and France towards NATO and co-operation.

From the days of de Gaulle onwards, France has pursued a very ostentatious policy of military independence from a US-dominated NATO, while Britain, insisting on the Special Relationship, has been particularly concerned to keep the US/European link, eagerly accepting and promoting every latest US strategic doctrine and deployment.

The answer lies in the pre-Chirac past. Although Chirac, elected in May 1995, ordered the tests after his predecessor Mitterand had resisted military and political pressure for their resumption, it was under Mitterand that French attitudes began to change with the promotion of ideas of joint European defence, including the possibility of a Euro-bomb.

As early as November 1992 a Franco-British Joint Commission on Nuclear Policy and Doctrine was set up. Meeting at senior civil servant level, by 1993 it was already examining French and British deterrent doctrines so that by November 1993, then Defence Secretary Malcolm Rifkind could state publicly that there "... are no differences

between France and the United Kingdom on the fundamental nuclear issues..."

In 1994, at the Chartres meeting of Defence Ministers, a co-ordinated approach to renewal of the NPT was worked out and a press statement concluded "Nuclear deterrence is at the base of European security. A European security policy without nuclear deterrence would be a feeble policy indeed."

Then, on 5 December 1995, France announced that it was rejoining NATO's Defence Planning and Military Committees, from which it had withdrawn in 1966. This "return to the heart of NATO's defence" (*The Independent*) was immediately to solve any operational problems arising from France's decision to place ground troops under NATO control in Bosnia. But it was also part of a considered French decision to reintegrate its forces, including nuclear forces, into joint European military planning.

The next step was the 17 January 1966 announcement that France would from now on take part, at a political level, in the full range of NATO defence discussions.

This process has been urged on by Britain who made French re-integration into NATO a condition of any future Anglo/French nuclear co-operation.

There are two main driving forces behind this coming together of two countries that are traditionally suspicious of each other's ambitions and activities.

Since the end of the Cold War, Britain has been casting round for a new role for its new Trident submarines. France, with its similar Triomphant missile-firing submarines coming into service later this year, has the same problem.

The British solution has been Tactical Trident: a single-warheaded missile, targeted on unspecified but presumably non-nuclear Third World countries in defence of undefined 'vital interests.'

French thinking is along the same lines. There are even suggestions of future joint or co-ordinated submarine patrols, although such a degree of operational integration lies in a very hypothetical future.

There have been problems along the way: during 1992/3, the French were lobbying hard for British financial support for the enormous development costs of their ASLP air-launched missile. When Britain decided not to replace the WE-177 free-fall bomb and hence to abandon any RAF nuclear role, the French were bitterly disappointed.

This illustrates the second reason for increased co-operation: the sheer cost of modern high-tech arms. Recent French military spending has been so weighted towards their nuclear forces that their conventional armed forces have been starved of resources.

As they now scramble to update their non-nuclear forces, the strains on the national budget are becoming intolerable. The expense factor is a Europe-wide problem. As an example, Britain, France, Germany and Sweden all have their own main battle tanks. The next-generation MBT is likely to be jointly developed and manufactured.

Similarly, only Britain and France have the ability to manufacture a complete modern fighter aircraft but the next generation Eurofighter will be a multi-national product.

Multi-national sharing of the development and building costs of new weapons systems adds to the pressures, political, military and economic, towards common military planning and even operations - although French hopes of involving Germany more fully in European defence co-operation have been damaged, at least temporarily, by German disquiet over French nuclear testing.

With the US distancing itself from British nuclear pretensions, to the point that British nuclear weapons could become a possible obstacle in any START 3 negotiations, Britain

Why did John Major support President Chirac when France resumed nuclear testing? In light of France's recent announcement not to carry out any more nuclear tests in the South Pacific, Lionel Trippett discusses in detail the answer to this question.

CND urges action over nuclear threat

by MIKE AMBROSE

Although not officially published until next month, the report has already caused concern in US defence circles and was being considered seriously in London yesterday after the Financial Times reported on its existence.

The report says that, because of the leakage of weapons-grade nuclear material from countries in the former Soviet Union, the poten-

tial for mass slaughter has increased rather than diminished since the cold war ended.

It says that the issue of nuclear insecurity is being tackled slowly - if at all - in Russia.

"Huge uninventoried quantities of weapons-usable material are stored and transported under condi-

tions of extreme insecurity," it warns.

But there are worrying signs that the problem could lead to a heavy-handed US involvement which could be counter-productive.

"Without US assistance, trouble is virtually certain," the Harvard report stated.

The 300 pages of evidence are

full of worrying indications about the scale of the problem.

It documents cases where Russian storage facilities for weapons-grade fissile material - much of which was the product of arms that were dismantled under various agreements - are sometimes less well guarded than ordinary factories.

JOB ADVERT RAINBOW CENTRE seek a PEACE SECTION COORDINATOR
TASK to assess the peace section in the library, reorganise in liaison with other section coordinators, keep up to date with campaigns, create a quick-reference index in each box.
LONG TERM TASK to publicise relevant campaigns in liaison with other groups, and to produce exhibitions on subjects within the section.
TIME ... 6 hrs per week. Telephone 958 5666 for further details.

begins to look more and more towards Europe as an arena in which to gain status and influence and to realise that the two European nuclear powers have very similar interests.

So France must be gently persuaded into NATO and the last thing the British government is likely to do is to criticise the Pacific nuclear tests.

Finally, another area of silence concerns the Chinese testing programme. Again, one nuclear power is reluctant to criticise another since to question their need for nuclear weapons is to question ours. In addition, with the Chinese poised to regain Hong Kong, too much is at stake financially for Britain to risk causing any avoidable offence.

Cancer cluster 'not radiation'

Chris Mihill
Medical Correspondent

THE leukaemia cluster around Sellafield is not caused by radiation but might be the result of an unidentified infection, scientists said yesterday.

The latest report of the Committee on the Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (Comare) says neither planned nor accidental discharges of radiation from Sellafield, nor staff exposure to radiation, can explain the incidence of childhood leukaemia in the Seascale area.

Comare, set up in 1985 as an independent group of experts to advise the Government on radiation in the environment, says the higher than normal number of leukaemia and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma cases between 1984 and 1992 confirms the excess of cases in people aged under 25 throughout the previous study period of 1963 to 1984.

"Taken together, all the available evidence indicates a

continued excess for four decades," the report says.

The scientists say there is little evidence that exposure to chemicals was responsible, but some form of infection could be a factor.

In recent years a number of studies have looked at the theory of "population mixing" triggering cancer clusters. A group of workers moving into a remote area could bring an infective agent which could trigger leukaemia in the vulnerable local population.

This agent has not been identified. There are viruses which can cause forms of leukaemia, but none has been found for childhood leukaemia.

The committee said an excessive amount of raw sewage in the Sellafield area when the nuclear plant was built might have increased the spread of infection, although there was no direct evidence of this.

Previous studies have found leukaemia clusters around new towns and oil rig construction sites.

N-test ban talks make progress

Ian Black
Diplomatic Editor

NEGOTIATIONS on a treaty outlawing all nuclear tests are approaching a successful conclusion, despite lingering anxiety about the positions of India and China, a senior British government official said yesterday.

"We are not home and dry but we will get there," said a Foreign Office diplomat close to the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, the forum for the long-running talks on the comprehensive test ban treaty (CTBT) — the most important arms control agreement in the post-cold-war world.

Hope of a successful outcome is growing because Russia and the United States are expected to co-ordinate their positions when presidents Boris Yeltsin and Bill Clinton meet in Moscow next month.

An agreement between the US and Russia on "zero-yield" testing, details of how the treaty enters into force, and technical arrangements for monitoring, would leave only India and China capable of sabotaging the treaty, and there are signs that their positions may be moderating.

Time is pressing, as the Geneva conference suspends its work at the end of this week and resumes in mid-May, although discussions are expected to continue in New York during the recess.

Last week the United Nations secretary-general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, appealed for the pact to be wrapped up by summer. The US wants it signed by September, before this year's presidential elections.

China, the last of the five officially recognised nuclear powers to acquire the bomb, has been holding out for the right to conduct so-called peaceful nuclear explosions — ostensibly for mining and industrial purposes — but has received no support.

"The general assumption is that they will accept the inevitable and climb down," the British official said.

India, like Pakistan and Israel a so-called "threshold" state with its own ability to produce a nuclear weapon, has been demanding a link between a CTBT and a promise to eliminate nuclear weapons completely within a set time, but this is rejected by the nuclear powers.

India's stand, which has broad domestic political support, is based on the fear of being open to blackmail by nuclear powers, especially China, if the big five — Russia, the US, China, Britain and France — are left with an indefinite monopoly on nuclear weapons.

But the five, who insist that they are all committed to renouncing their nuclear weapons eventually, say it is too soon to begin such discussions and that any attempt to link this to a CTBT could sink the pact.

India's position could prevent an agreement, but if it maintains its stance other countries can override it by going to the UN General Assembly. "If India comes along, China will not risk isolation," the official said. "If India objects, the odds are that the Chinese will too."

A CTBT has become possible largely because the nuclear powers are now able to use simulation techniques instead of nuclear explosions.

Chernobyl — Ten years on..

The tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear power station disaster is not one that the nuclear power industry, and hence the government, wants to be marked.

If provoked into any sort of public statement, we can be sure of an official line that emphasises that the Russian-designed reactor was a uniquely bad design, shoddily constructed and operated by incompetent technicians. Any suggestion that Chernobyl had anything in common with the super-safe designs, superbly constructed and managed British nuclear reactors will be pooh-poohed. 'It couldn't happen here' will be the endlessly parroted cry.

The complete safety of the British nuclear power industry is only one of a series of lies on the subject. For many years, not only was nuclear power presented as safe but cheap, non-polluting and of course completely unconnected with nuclear weapons.

Now it is publicly accepted that nuclear power is so expensive that the government can't even sell most of it at any price to a City scared stiff by decommissioning costs.

The radioactive pollution spreading from Sellafield in particular is now so well documented that the very word *nuclear* has had to be dropped from the newly-titled British Energy.

Chernobyl was not an unfortunate but far away event, like an Ethiopian famine, with no relevance to Britain. Within forty-eight hours of the explosion and fire, radioactive rain was falling across Wales and Cumbria. Even now there are still upland areas where sheep may not safely graze.

The nuclear industry has always been more than happy to accept any official Soviet line that downplays the casualties of Chernobyl. Adi Roche's eyewitness account *The Children of Chernobyl* is a vivid reminder that ten years on, we are remembering a disaster not only of the past, but the present also.

Nuclear power and nuclear weapons

The civil nuclear industry maintains that there is no connection between nuclear power and nuclear weapons. This assertion ignores a number of fundamental facts:

- Historically, the main impetus to develop nuclear reactors was the desire to produce plutonium for bombs rather than to generate electricity.
- It is impossible to operate a nuclear reactor without at the same time using or manufacturing materials that could be used for nuclear weapons.
- Any nuclear reactor can be run in such a way as to optimise production of weapons grade plutonium.

However, any grade of plutonium can be used to make a nuclear explosive. In June 1994, the US confirmed it had used reactor grade plutonium (from UK reactors) in a nuclear weapons test in 1962.

There is clear evidence of the links between military and civil nuclear power. Until 1969, for example, plutonium from the UK's (civil) Magnox reactors went into the military stockpiles of both the UK and the US. Meanwhile, in January 1994 the UK government admitted it had moved material from the civil to the military stockpile on no less than 571 occasions since 1979 — on average, once every 10 days.

Any country with a nuclear power industry is accumulating plutonium and has the technology, infrastructure and skilled personnel that could quickly transfer to a nuclear weapons programme. The spread of nuclear technology assists the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The record clearly shows that there is no such thing as a "civil" and a "military" atom. Nuclear power has no place in a world struggling to avoid the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Break the silence: Lionel Trippett and Dave Andrews look at the likely official response to Chernobyl and the links between nuclear power and nuclear weapons.

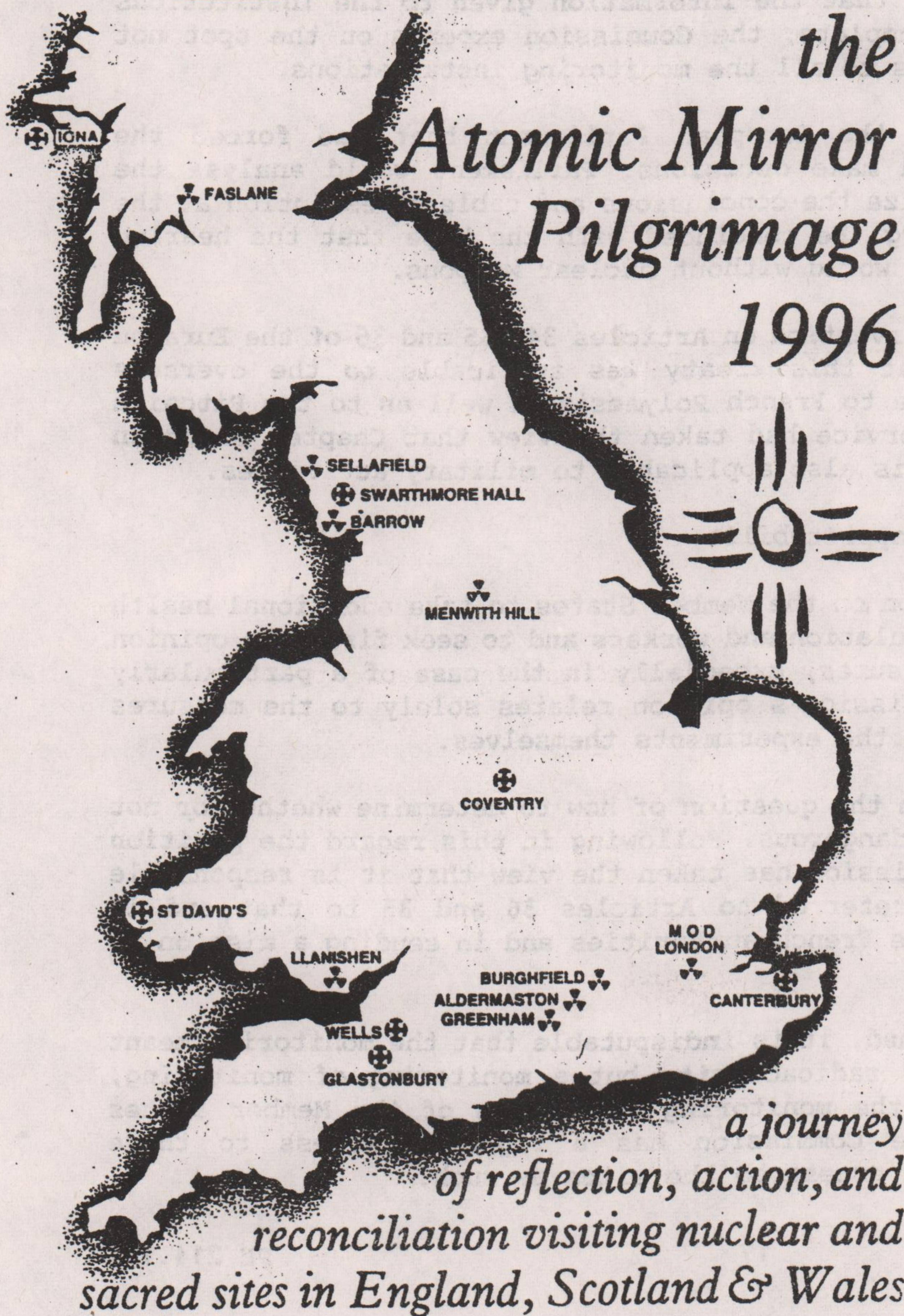
SEASCALE REPORT The scientific dismissal of radiation as a cause of the leukaemia cluster in Seascale appears to neglect one scientific fact: microscopic particles of alpha-emitters (eg plutonium) are undetectable once lodged within the body. If assessment is based on current Sellafield emissions it may give a mistakenly clean result. The 'hot particle' theory of radiation disease takes into account all pollution sources -- including existing particles in the environment dating from earlier years when discharge limits were looser. The half-life of plutonium-239 is around 30,000 years....

However, when two competences are involved, especially in the case of access to monitoring facilities situated on sites themselves to which access is limited (for secrecy/defence reasons), they should be articulated in accordance with the principle of proportionality as recognized by the Court.

A Member State must facilitate the achievement of the Community's tasks and conversely the Community must respect the competence of the Member State. The question of whether a Member State has been right or wrong in pitting its own competence against that of the Community must be decided on a case-by-case basis depending on the grounds and circumstances.

LATE EXTRAS

This is the conclusion of the hearing by the European Parliament from the summary record of the public hearing of 16 & 17 Oct 1995 on nuclear tests. This has been sent to us by Mel Read, our Euro MP. The full text is in our office should anyone wish to read it.



DAVID LANE

will be on this
pilgrimage.

H. CONCLUSIONS OF THE HEARING

Summing up the presentations and discussions, Mr Ken COLLINS, chairman of the Conference of Committee Chairmen, said it was clear that the resumption of the French nuclear tests in the Pacific had a negative impact both on the situation of the local population and on relations between French Polynesia and France, and relations between the European Union and Australia and New Zealand.

The risks for the environment, including geological stability and public health were as clear as the negative consequences for the labour market and the local economies.

As to the assessment of the need for the tests to enable France to commit itself to the comprehensive test ban (CTBT), or to allow the development of new nuclear weapons, it had not been possible to eliminate the conflicting opinions among the experts. Opinions were still very divided.

One of the main conclusions of the hearing was that information sharing and information monitoring were of crucial importance for the European Union. In this context it was deplorable that the information given to the institutions of the European Union was incomplete, the Commission experts on the spot not having been able to gain access to all the monitoring installations.

Mr Collins said it had been the European Parliament that had forced the Commission to take action and make decisions. Parliament would analyse the results of the hearing, summarize the conclusions and table a resolution at the next part-session in Strasbourg. He concluded with the hope that the hearing would mark a step forward to a world without nuclear weapons.

Mr Dewost concentrated his intervention on Articles 34, 35 and 36 of the Euratom Treaty. He finally stated that this treaty was applicable to the overseas countries and territories, thus to French Polynesia as well as to the Pitcairn Islands. Moreover the Legal Service had taken the view that Chapter 3 and in particular Article 34 thereof is also applicable to military activities.

However there are problems of applicability.

Article 34 imposes an obligation on the Member States to take additional health and safety measures for the population and workers and to seek first the opinion of the Commission on those measures, especially in the case of a particularly dangerous experiment. The Commission's opinion relates solely to the measures and not to the desirability of the experiments themselves.

However the treaty is silent on the question of how to determine whether or not an experiment is particularly dangerous. Following in this regard the position of its Legal Service, the Commission has taken the view that it is responsible for its own opinion. It has referred to Articles 36 and 35 to that end in requesting information from the French authorities and in sending a mission to the site.

As far as Article 35 is concerned, it is indisputable that the monitoring meant is not a direct monitoring of radioactivity but a monitoring of monitoring, which involves checking that the monitoring facilities of the Member States operate effectively, that the Commission has a right of access to these facilities but has no right of access to the sites as such.